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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews existing manpower training programs in light of the dual labor market theory, and discusses the implications for community colleges in addressing the needs of the unemployed within their service areas. The dual labor market theory postulates that there are two distinct spheres of employment: a primary labor market in which participants are highly skilled, have good work attitudes, are well-paid and have opportunities for advancement, and a secondary labor market in which the participants are unskilled, uneducated, transient, marginally compensated, have poor attitudes, and have limited chances for advancement. The most important differences between the two spheres are education and attitudes. Current manpower training programs typically focus only on job skills education, with limited attention paid to training in attitude improvement and interpersonal skills. The success of such programs is dubious. On the other hand, some community colleges have programs which integrate personal development education and skills training, with the result proving better than job skills education alone. Several recommendations are included by means of which community colleges can more effectively respond to the needs of the participants in the secondary labor market. A bibliography is attached. (JDS)

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THE DUAL LABOR MARKET THEORY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

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THE DUAL LABOR MARKET THEORY: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BACKGROUND

Problem. To examine the dual labor market theory and to determine its possible implications on the community college.

Background. Authorities are in general agreement that the modern comprehensive community college's mission far transcends traditional concepts of providing education in only preparatory and preprofessional subject matter. Its greater mission is to react to the needs of the community which it serves.

While the writer would not agree with those whom Cohen describes as zealots who sold the community college concept by alleging that the problems of the unemployed would be reduced (8:8), there can be no doubt that any institution which purports to respond to the needs of the community must be aware of the nature of those needs. It therefore behooves the community college educator to have a complete understanding of the nature of unemployment and, where indicated, to respond to the needs of the unemployed segment of his constituency.

As of 30 June 1976, there were 94,000,000 Americans in the total labor force and the unemployment rate was 8.0% (33). This figure is somewhat misleading, however, in that it includes many who are in a transient status between jobs and others whose jobs are seasonal in nature. If one accepts an unemployment rate of 4.0 %, as per the Full Employment Act of 1949, as being "full employment," then it may be inferred that some 3,760,000 members of the labor force are unemployed and actively seeking employment. To this number must be added a large number of victims of the discouraged worker effect

who do not fall within the restrictive definition of being unemployed, in that they have not actively sought employment within the last 60 days (7:183). When it is considered that there are approximately 55,000,000 adult residents of this country who are considered as not being in the labor force, if only 5% of these "not in labor force" adults are discouraged workers, then an additional 2,750,000 potential workers should be added to the unemployment figure. The overall total would then be in excess of 6,500,000.

While the above national scale unemployment data is so overwhelming as to cause one to question whether the junior college community could possibly make any inroads into the problem, the data become more manageable when considered on the local level. The current unemployment rate for San Antonio is 8.8% (33). Using the procedures outlined above yields a figure of 34,600 local citizens who are potentially productive but actually unemployed. Local level consideration also takes on a personal dimension when costs in supportive taxes and social ramifications are considered.

THE NATURE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

General. External limitations to the length of this paper prevent detailed discussion as to the theories of unemployment. Consequently, information presented in this section will be greatly oversimplified and will include only those aspects of prevailing labor market theories absolutely necessary to an understanding of possible implications for the public junior college. Information concerning the competitive model and queue theory is from Cartter and Marshall (7) while that concerning the internal labor market

and the dual labor market theory is from Doeringer and Piore (11 & 12).

Competitive Model Theory. Traditional concepts as to the nature of unemployment are based upon the competitive model theory. This theory is derived from neo-classical economics wherein the labor market is as a function of a relatively simplistic supply and demand procedure. Basic to the theory is that there is complete lateral and vertical mobility within the market.

Individual workers within the competitive model are ranked in a heirarchal ordering according to their productivity or value to the employer. The allocative process within the market is determined by the concept of marginal productivity based on the law of diminishing returns which states that, if capital and other variables remain constant, the increase in total productivity for each additional unit of labor is less than the individual contributions of previous units. Thus, if the output of labor were charted in accordance with its heirarchal ordering, the resultant curve would be negative and downward sloping. Supply of labor, on the other hand, is that amount of labor available at a given wage, assuming that additional units would be available from those adults not in the labor force at higher wages. If charted, the relationship between labor supply and its price would be a positive upward sloping curve. Juxtaposition of the two graphs would result in an intersection which is termed the point of equilibrium and it represents both the appropriate wage rate and the most efficient use of capital and labor.

The heirarchal ordering of workers in the competive model has given rise to the queue theory. Employers utilize the most preferred

workers from the top of the list. At a certain point on the queue, there is a port of entry and those ranked above this point are employed while those below are unemployed. Adjustments to fluctuations in the business cycle are relatively simple. During periods of increased demands for labor, employers go further down the queue, and provide training to overcome deficiencies in productive abilities. Conversely, the port of entry is higher on the queue during periods of lesser demand. "Structural unemployment" is used to describe those who rank below the prevailing port of entry, those who do not possess the requisite qualifications demanded in the labor market.

It is highly germane to this study that existing manpower programs are based on the queue theory. Application of the theory reveals that individual workers take on an aura of human capital worth depending upon their productivity. Consequently, programs to improve one's standing on the queue are aimed only at increasing productivity by upgrading his education and job skills. Particular note is to given to the fact that no mention is made of human factors such as attitudes, values, and work habits. Rather, the worker is considered in the highly impersonal vein as being human capital. It is in this light that the many existing manpower programs have been designed - they are almost completely skill oriented.

Internal Labor Markets and the Dual Labor Market Theory. In 1971, two young economists, Peter B. Doeringer and Michael J Piore, postulated a new theory as to the nature of unemployment in a joint doctoral dissertation. Their theory is being given increasing attention in the economic field, and if it is valid, it portends a

need for rethinking by educators and manpower planners who are concerned with educating unemployed adults for gainful employment.

Basic to the theory is the postulate that the labor market in a highly industrialized and technological society is not an open ended queue. Rather, large industries require individuals with specialized enterprise specific skills which are not readily filled from external sources and these individual employers develop internal labor markets to meet their needs. The internal labor markets, in turn greatly restrict both lateral and vertical mobility of workers. The job specificity which develops within the various enterprises gives rise to a series of internal mobility clusters of skill related jobs and vertical mobility is generally within the mobility clusters.

Entry into the internal labor market is at the bottom of one of the mobility clusters. Movement is determined by seniority, ability, and the outer limits of the individual cluster or another skill related cluster. Wages are determined by external comparisons, individual job evaluations, and management engineering studies, and tend to be high. The wage structures are such that they foster mobility of the best qualified into the more responsible positions and provide incentives for employee stability. When required by business cycles or other reasons to recruit externally, the wage structuring devices are manipulated to draw employees from competitors or other sources. Employee stability in regard to these highly skilled workers is of tantamount importance to employers. Consequently, wages are high, working conditions good, and benefits are numerous. The workers in this "primary labor market" are

predominantly white, have achieved a relatively high educational level, have specific enterprise related skills, possess good work habits and are stable workers.

No enterprise, however, is devoid of many menial tasks which require manpower to accomplish. These are the jobs relegated to secondary portion of the dual labor market. The workers within the secondary labor market are generally uneducated, unskilled, and, in a disproportionate number, members of ethnic minority groups. However, some members of this group are educated and do possess skills, but their skills have either become obsolete or are not revelant to those required in the primary sector of the market.

Due to the fact that there are always many potential secondary labor market workers available, the employer does not find it necessary to provide work incentives, high wages, or fringe benefits which might promote worker stability. Conversely, workers within the secondary market are fully aware that they are frozen out of the higher paying jobs of the primary market and have no place to go. Lacking in promotional opportunity and receiving only minimal remuneration for their work, they feel no allegiance toward their employers and develop poor work habits such as chronic lateness, absenteeism, insubordination, and resort to petty theivery from their employers. They are also very unstable and drift from job to job reinforcing their poor work habits and attitudes until they finally reach a point of being unemployable. They then join the

many other discouraged workers who do not even seek employment, preferring to become members of the streetcorner culture and exist by means of crime, welfare, and unemployment compensation.

As is evident, educational and manpower programs aimed at those on the lower end of the queue, as developed from the competitive model, are not relevant to two key factors in the dual labor market theory. The first is that, for many unemployed, skill training must be more specific or enterprise related. Secondly, training and education must be expanded from the limited context of general and occupational to include value reorientation to overcome the poor habits and attitudes associated with those members of the secondary labor market. With the two segments of the dual labor market being mutually exclusive, the only effective remedy is to provide members of the secondary market the prerequisites for entry into the primary sector - i.e., both skills and attitudes. Such is the challenge to our educational system in general and to the public junior college community in particular.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

National Policies and Programs. Most existing programs stem from the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962, as amended in 1963, 1965, and 1967, (MDTA) and are federally funded. Once the federal government entered the field of manpower development, there was a proliferation of legislation with many programs created on a piecemeal basis, under a variety of agencies, and marked by wasteful duplication. Probably the most limiting factor in regard to

their effectiveness was that local authorities were granted very little control over the programs. Consequently, local revelance was, and is, questionable. Although a detailed description of each of these programs is beyond the scope of this paper, a partial listing of those which are or have been operable in San Antonio will illustrate their proliferation. They include: Neighborhood Youth Program, New Careers, JOBS, Concentrated Employment Program, Job Corps, Operation Mainstream, and Public Service Careers.

The objectives of the various programs may be inferred from those of the MDTA. They were: (1) Train depressed area residents, (2) Defend against automation, (3) Give unemployed skills to match job openings, (4) Long term development of manpower resources, and (5) Increase spending (41). Conspicuous by their absence are the areas of attitude and value reorientation.

In recognition of wasteful duplication and, more importantly, to give local control to unemployment programs, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) was passed in 1974. In local implementation, administrative and operational control has been vested in the Adult Manpower Program Office of the city of San Antonio. The office operates under the overall control of a CETA Committee consisting of representatives from the federal government, The Alamo Area Council of Governments, and the San Antonio Union College District.

Community College Programs in San Antonio. Direct involvement of the San Antonio Union College District is manifested in two ways, representation on the CETA Committee and operation of the San Antonio Skills Center.

The Skills Center, located at 1617 E. Commerce St., operates as a part of the Continuing Education Division of the college district. In practice, it is relatively autonomous, often being referred to as the district's third campus. Funding is through CETA and student recruitment is almost exclusively through CETA referral. There is no active outreach program for this recruitment as there are more than sufficient numbers of walk-ins to fill all classes. Most of the walk-ins become aware of the program by word-of-mouth while some few are referred by the Texas Employment Commission (18).

Activities at the Skills Center far transcend the vocational training conducted at the center itself. Through its Office of Special Programs, the center enrolls trainees throughout the eleven county area served by the Community Council of South Central Texas. Each individual's needs are assessed by a highly qualified counselor and enrollment is then effected in whichever program best suits the individual's needs, interests, and abilities. Participating schools include trade schools, hospitals for LVN training and community colleges in Beeville, Uvalde, and San Antonio.

The center is far more than a counseling brokerage. It offers a wide range of vocational education programs which are geared to the needs of the San Antonio labor market. Course offerings are: air conditioning repair, radio-television repair, production machines operation, combination welder, automobile mechanics, body repair, small gasoline engine repair, electrical appliance repair, and furniture upholstery. Courses range in length from 27 to 39 weeks and are open-ended so that students may enter on any Monday and

leave whenever their respective courses are completed.

Students are paid a minimum wage stipend and provided assistance with such problems as housing, transportation, child care, and health and dental problems. Additional family allowances are paid whenever circumstances so warrant. In addition, and in accordance with the enacting legislation, training is provided in communications skills, ESL, and GED preparation.

Current enrollment at the San Antonio Skills Center is 315. During fiscal year 1976, a total of 650 students entered the program with 342 (52.6%) completing. 202 of the graduates (59%) were placed in productive jobs. Although supporting data are not available, it is estimated that slightly fewer than 50% of those placed were still employed one year after completion of the course (17). If such be the case, then experience would indicate that only 15% of those who enter the program are still gainfully employed as a result of their training one year after their respective completion dates.

The San Antonio Union College District's Division of Continuing Education also participates with local businesses in a cooperative effort termed the Buyer Betterment Program. The course of studies is conducted upon specific request of business and is aimed at upgrading employee skills. It is modest in scope, having been implemented only twice in the past year (20).

Other Relevant Programs. An examination of the literature reveals a number of different programs which have been inaugurated by other community colleges to meet the demands of job specificity and to combat problems of unemployment within their respective areas of constituency.

In the matter of job specificity, there are numerous accounts of cooperative educational programs. These programs are a part of the greater vocational education effort and are characterized by the students' taking courses in the basic fields on campus, or at an extension thereof, with the bulk of their vocational education being taken on-the-job with a potential employer. Cooperative education programs are mutually beneficial in that the cooperating enterprise is developing a labor pool which will be equipped to move into primary market type jobs while students are assured of specific job relevant education. In addition, students are usually paid a stipend by the employer which helps to defray the cost of their education.

Another program worthy of mention is "New Careers" as reported on by Shatz and Steinberg. "New Careers is a broadly conceived, multi-goal program which attempts (inter alia) to develop new approaches to the education of the undereducated, unemployed and disadvantaged . . . thereby changing their lifestyles." (36:12) While the program has other aspects, this particular segment is funded under the Scheur Amendment to the Equal Opportunity Act and applies specifically to the community college. Inaugurated in eight community colleges in 1968, it was expected to spread to fifty the following year. Highly germane to the thesis of this paper is that the program is not limited to skill training but also includes on-the-job training, remedial education, supportive services, continuing education aimed toward high school completion, and most importantly, a general core. That core could most properly be classified as attitudinal and value reorientation. The high degree of relevance is indicated by

the authors' own description:

> Topics such as the world of work, perspectives on poverty, minority group history, communications, human growth and development, normal and abnormal behavior, and field trips are discussed as part of the core group process. Discussion focuses on the job experience, and individual problems are utilized as vehicles to move discussion into broader areas of discussion. For example, if a trainee exhibits poor work habits by frequent lateness, the discussion in core group would focus on what this means to the client's expectation of service and increased load on other staff. No attempt is made to use the core group as a therapeutic millieu. (36:17).

In a 1967 report on its MDTA Basic Education and Vocational Classes, the Adult Education Division of Santa Barbara Community College reported on a skills center program which was characterized by general educational development, intensive counseling, group discussion similar to that described above, field trips, and on-the-job training. The report concluded:

> Success in bringing about changes of attitude on the part of the trainees and in eventual job placement was remarkably high in the overall program. This success was achieved by a dedicated staff, employing new and flexible teaching methods in Basic Education classes and personal counseling sessions which established individual rapport between staff and trainees. Field trips were taken to community governmental, educational, cultural, and recreational facilities which helped broaden the horizons of the trainees. This personalized approach helped the program participant overcome the feeling of alienation and hopelessness acquired from a lifetime of poverty and frustration. (35:2).

The report also concluded that the Basic Education program was as effective in job placements as vocational training and that the greater the length of the basic education, even at the expense of vocational training, the higher the incidence of job placement.

A Controlled Experiment. More recently and on the local scene, Bumstead conducted a controlled experiment at the San

Antonio Skills Center which is the subject of his doctoral dissertation for the School of Education, Ohio State University. The experiment compared two groups of students, one of which received skills training only while the other also took a personal development course aimed at improving their self concepts. The personal development course consisted of forty hours of instruction in such areas as personal assessment, communications skills, problem solving, interpersonal and job-related skills, financial management, consumer credit and buying, social insurance and retirement, and employment preparation and employer-employee relations.

The primary purpose of the study was to determine whether there was a significant difference in development of self concept development between the two groups as measured by the Tennessee Self Concept Scale. Although he found no significant differences in measurable self concept, corollary findings are relevant to the issue at hand. After completion of the course, there were significant differences in salaries and absentee rates, both favoring members of the group which had completed the personal development course.

Second Hand Information. The Bumstead paper reported on other studies which were not available to this student within the time limitation set for submission of this paper. However, their collective indication as to the relationship between attitudes and employment renders them worthy of mention herein, even though primary source data are not available. Their substance is probably best summarized in a report by Mrs. Edna Barnett, Director of Financial Aid at Wallace Technical Community College, Hanceville, Alabama.

She is quoted by Bumstead as concluding:

> The vocational educator's primary goal is to train a student to get and hold a job . . . 90 percent of those persons who lose their jobs are discharged not because of lack of skill, but because of their inability to get along with other people . . . . All graduates who had not been successful in holding their jobs fell into the category of not getting along with others because of poor attitudes. (4:15-16).

PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

General. Despite repeated attempts by recognized authorities to quantify the results of the various manpower development programs, no fully valid evaluative techniques have yet been devised. These attempts have included the devising of complicated mathematical formulae which include such exotic sounding factors as social discount rates, social opportunity costs, controlled environment output, and worth of human capital. However, the resultant cost: benefit analyses have been highly limited in value due to unquantifiable variables such as attitudinal effects, effects on second and subsequent generations and crime rates (14). The lack of criteria upon which to base definitive evaluations is summarized in a 1974 report by the National Academy of Sciences which states, "After 10 years of massive expenditures on manpower training programs and many evaluation studies, relatively little is known about their impact." (28:37).

It is therefore necessary to apply subjective judgement in evaluating the various programs and their associated curricula. Such judgement would lead this observer to question whether a heavily vocational education oriented program such as that of the San Antonio Skills Center where only 15% of those who enter are

still gainfully employed one year after their scheduled completion dates can be considered effective. On the other hand, even in the absence of quantifiable data, the preponderance of evidence would indicate that those programs which emphasize attitudinal change and on-the-job vocational education have experienced at least a modicum of success.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions.

1. Whether one agrees with all facets of the dual labor market theory is irrelevant. The fact is that the evidence indicates that the two most germane aspects of the theory are irrefutable:

a. In a highly industrialized, technological society, a large percentage of jobs are marked with a high degree of specificity which requires on-the-job training on the specialized equipment of individual employers. Consequently, on-campus vocational education lacks relevance to that portion of the job market.

b. A significant portion of the unemployed segment of our society is unemployed due to manifestation of the personal traits which Doeringer and Piore attribute to the secondary labor market. They are: (1) poor work habits, (2) poor attitudes toward work, (3) dishonesty, (4) street corner behavior patterns, (5) distrust of the "establishment," and (6) a discouraged outlook on life.

2. There are probably many among authoritative community college theorists who would argue that the community college has no role in attacking a societal problem of such magnitude as that of national unemployment. For example, Reynolds contends that the community

college's efforts toward solving community problems such as crime and poverty are more indirect than direct through the provision of services which assist in the understanding of these problems (31:86). While it is readily conceded that the community college cannot in and of itself solve the problems of unemployment, the public junior college community has tacitly agreed that it does have a role by its own widespread involvement in programs aimed at the unemployed. Participation in cooperative education programs, operation of skill centers, participation in New Careers, and emphasis on occupational guidance are just a few manifestations of this involvement. Furthermore, the comprehensive community college occupies a position in the education heirarchy which renders it unique in its ability to make inroads into the problems of the secondary labor market. As pointed out by Shatz and Steinberg:

> Junior colleges are more flexible in curriculum experimentation, and innovation in the educational process as an expanding list of offerings in the AAJC Occupational Education Bulletin amptly demonstrates. This expertise can be applied to the identification of community needs, gaps in services, direct and indirect assistance in mounting education and training programs, and broad involvement of faculty in specific areas of curriculum development, training, remediation, training of agency supervisors and planning and consultive services. (36:16)

Recommendations. Given that the public junior college does have a mission in this area, what then are the actions which must be taken if the mission is to be accomplished? In answer, each greater action and the community college's role therein will be briefly discussed below. Where pertaining, implications will be applied to the local area.

1. Recognizing the nature of the problem. The first step

in problem solving is problem definition. As pointed out in the discussion as to the nature of unemployment, if the dual labor market theory is valid, the primary factors which inhibit members of the secondary labor market from becoming productive citizens are a lack of general education, lack of enterprise related specific skills, and, most important, poor attitudes as manifested in their work habits. It therefore behooves vocational educators at all levels to further study the theory to determine its validity. If, as the writer believes, the theory is proved to be valid, then widespread curriculum evaluations and modifications along with resource reallocation are indicated.

2. Reaching the target population. According to local CETA officials, there are more walk-ins from the target population than existing facilities can accommodate (18). Further, large numbers are on the rolls of welfare agencies and state employment commissions. It is therefore considered that outreach programs should properly be administered by existing state and federal agencies who are equipped for this function. The role of the community college would consequently be limited to maintaining liaison with counselors from these agencies to ensure that they are fully conversant with the various educational programs.

3. Training for job specificity. Community colleges are already highly active in this area through the many cooperative education programs which are becoming increasingly pervasive. While there will always be a need for graduates from the traditional vocational education programs and they should definitely remain a part of the

curriculum, cooperative education should receive increased emphasis in areas of highly specialized industry. Locally, the lack of heavy industry in San Antonio relegates this type of vocational education to a position of lesser importance than in such cities as Detroit, Pittsburg and Seattle. Even so, the limited opportunities which do exist should be exploited to demonstrate a responsiveness to labor market needs which could conceivably attract new industry.

4. Attitude reorientation. Probably the most important area in which the community college can exert its influence is in reorienting attitudes of those who manifest the characteristics of the secondary labor market. The matter as to what should be included in a value or attitude curriculum will require a great deal of attention by community college curriculum experts. However, the evidence would indicate that it should be a careful blend of remedial education, general education, job orientation, employer expectations, employee responsibilities and rights, interpersonal relationships, and societal expectations with a comprehensive individual counseling program. Recommended points of departure for this curriculum concept are the programs which have been discussed in this paper.

5. Guidance and counseling. A concentrated counseling program, both occupational and personal, is a necessary corollary to any program of instruction. Community colleges must carefully integrate individual and group counseling with any planned program of instruction which hopes to be effective with this particular target population. Full implementation will require the training of

additional counselors and the maintaining of close liaison with counselors from funding and referral agencies and with social workers who might be assigned to individual cases.

6. Placement of graduates. Community college efforts in this area should be concentrated toward coordination with public placement agencies which are equipped for this function - e. g., Texas Employment Commission.

7. Supportive services. Members of the target population are adults and many have family responsibilities which require extensive supportive services if they are to pursue their respective courses of instruction. These services range from outright financial support to assistance in such matters as legal aid, child care, and medical care. Supportive services are properly the domain of the existing manpower and social agencies, with the community college's role being limited to counseling and referral.

SUMMARY

Most vocational education and manpower training programs aimed at making the unemployed employable are based on the queue theory of the labor market. That is, individuals are ranked on the queue according to their productivity, and employability is improved by upgrading their productive skills. This theory disregards the factor of human behavior as it applies to an individual's position in the labor market.

The recently postulated dual labor market theory, however, states that there is not a single labor market but a series of

internal labor markets which require enterprise specific skills. In order to retain workers with requisite skills, employers pay high wages, grant benefits, and give visibility to paths of advancement. The individuals who occupy positions in this "primary labor market" are well educated, highly skilled, stable, and possess good work habits. Conversely, menial tasks which do not require specialized skills are relegated to a "secondary labor market." Individuals in this market are usually both uneducated and unskilled. Whatever initial motivation they might have soon gives way to discouragement due to low pay, lack of benefits, and the absence of visible paths of advancement into the primary market. As a consequence, they drift into behavior patterns marked by poor work habits and poor attitutes toward both work and society. Ultimately, they become unemployable due to their own behavior patterns.

The challenge presented to the adult educator by the dual labor market theory has many facets. If the theory is valid, as this student believes it to be, vocational education for the unemployed must be redirected. Specific enterprise related skills must be developed through increased emphasis on cooperative education; general education must be upgraded; and most importantly, programs must be developed which will reorient the attitudes of those in the secondary labor market. The comprehensive community college, working in concert with manpower and social agencies, is uniquely suited to this task.

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